VICTIMS PROGRAMS

STATUS REPORT

2001/2002

Alberta
SOLICITOR GENERAL

106-02766/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS 3

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT 4

HISTORY 4

VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAMS COMMITTEE 5

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 5
COMMITTEE STAFF SUPPORT 5
COMMITTEE MEETINGS 5

FUNDING AGREEMENTS 5

GRANT FUNDING FORMULA 6
GRANTS PROVIDED 6
POLICE BASED PROGRAMS 8
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS 10

PROGRAM ACTIVITY 13

INTRODUCTION 13
NEW CASES 14
PERSONS ASSISTED 14
TYPE OF ASSISTANCE 15
VOLUNTEER HOURS 16

ALBERTA SOLICITOR GENERAL INITIATIVES 17

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT PROGRAM 17
REQUESTING RESTITUTION PROGRAM 18
VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR TRAINING 18
VICTIM AWARENESS TRAINING AND HANDBOOK 19
QUARTERLY REPORT FORM 19
BROCHURES 19
NOVA CONFERENCE 19

APPENDIX A - ALBERTA POLICE BASED VICTIM SERVICE UNITS 20

CONTACT US 21

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Grants totaling $1,596,699 were provided to 78 victim assistance programs in fiscal year 2001/02.
- 75% of grant funds, for a total of $1,198,360 were provided to police based (RCMP and municipal) programs.
- Community programs and projects received a total of $398,339 in grants.
- As of June 1, 2002, Alberta's network of police based victim assistance programs consisted of 72 programs operating 105 victim service units.
- Victim service programs reported handling 30,332 new cases. Over half (59%) involved assisting victims of violent crime.
- Programs reported providing services to 38,141 people in 2001/02, of which 30,590 (80%) were adults and 7,551 (20%) were children.
- The type of assistance most frequently provided for new and ongoing cases was information.
- Approximately 1,640 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 229,439 volunteer hours.
- Providing general assistance (information, crisis intervention and referrals), accounted for the majority of volunteers' time.
- A total of 2,571 victim impact statements were completed by victims of crime and, of those, 2,245 were filed with the Court once charges were laid.
- Victim impact statements were most often completed and filed in cases of common assault, sexual assault and domestic assault.
- During the year, 1,594 requests for restitution were completed and returned to the police. Of these, 1,453 were forwarded to the Crown. The majority of requests concerned non-violent crimes.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

History

The *Victims' Programs Assistance Act,* proclaimed January 16, 1991, established the Victims Programs Assistance Fund and provided for the appointment of a Victims Programs Assistance Committee. The Committee was established to review grant applications for programs and services that benefit victims of crime and to make recommendations respecting funding to the Solicitor General and Attorney General of Alberta.

The *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)* was proclaimed August 1, 1997, for all provisions of the *Act*, except those directly associated with the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime. On November 1, 1997, the financial benefits section was proclaimed. The *Victims of Crime Act* replaced the *Victims' Programs Assistance Act* and *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act*, and established the authority to collect surcharges of 15% on provincial statute offences.

A Fund into which provincial and federal surcharges are collected and deposited was also established under *VOCA*. Section 10 of the *Act* provides for payments from the Fund. Expenditures include grants approved by the Solicitor General, costs incurred by the Victims of Crime Programs Committee, the Criminal Injuries Review Board, expenses to persons whose services are engaged by the Solicitor General, and financial benefits payable to victims of crime for injuries suffered. Salaries, benefits and other expenditures related to the administration of the *Act* are also paid from the Fund.

The *Act* includes principles respecting the treatment of victims and establishes rights for victims to obtain certain information.

An office of the Director, *VOCA*, was created. This office operates within the Public Security Division, under the Department of the Solicitor General, and is responsible for the administration of the *Act*. Victims who do not feel they have been treated in accordance with the principles of the *Act* can obtain information from this office as to how to resolve their concerns.

Two core programs operate under *VOCA* - a financial benefits program for individual victims who have suffered injury as a result of a criminal offence, and a grants program that provides funding to groups and organizations offering information, assistance and support to victims during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

The *Act* established the Victims of Crime Programs Committee appointed by the Solicitor General. The Committee evaluates applications for grants to programs and makes recommendations to the Solicitor General on grant funding. Funding decisions made by the Solicitor General are based upon the Committee's recommendations.

VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Committee Members

The Committee consists of four members, with two members representing the community at-large, one member representing police and one member representing government.

Members during 2001/2002 were:

Mr. Richard Smedstad (Chairman) – member-at-large, Sherwood Park, Alberta;
Sgt. Mona Jorgensen (Calgary Police Service) – representing police;
Ms. Diane Wickenheiser – member-at-large, Hays, Alberta;
Mr. Peter Teasdale (Alberta Justice) – representing government

Committee Meetings

Meetings are scheduled twice per year to evaluate grant applications submitted for the April 1st and October 1st application deadlines. The Committee met on June 7th and 8th, 2001 and December 10th, 2001. Forty-three new grant applications were evaluated by the Committee and 42 applications were approved for funding by the Solicitor General.

FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Programs approved for funding are required to enter into agreements that outline terms and conditions to be met. In accordance with the agreement, funded programs are required to submit quarterly statistics, financial statements and an evaluation report upon expiry of their funding term.

On October 1, 1999, a new grant funding formula was introduced to help ensure that grant monies are allocated fairly and equitably throughout the province. The formula is used to calculate a base funding amount for eligible programs. The formula:

- Allocates a specified amount from the Victims of Crime Fund to police based programs that provide basic services, and

- Utilizes a per crime amount that has been calculated using violent crime statistics from Uniform Crime Report data submitted to the Department of the Solicitor General by all police services.

Police based programs may receive additional funding if any of the following discretionary factors apply:

- large geographical area/low population density
- unique demographics
- weaker economic base
- lack of other support services
- new programs/projects
- other special circumstances that may be identified by the applicant.

Eligible specialized community programs/projects that benefit victims during the criminal justice process and are non-police based are also eligible for discretionary funding.

Eligible programs may receive a minimum grant of $2,000 and a maximum of $75,000 per year.

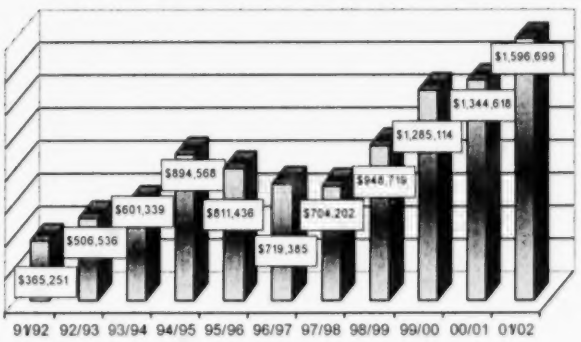
2001/2002 was the third year that eligible programs received three-year grant funding commitments allowing them to budget for the future. To be considered eligible, an established program must have operated successfully for three years in a partnership with Alberta Solicitor General, met the conditions of previous funding agreements, and demonstrated sound management practices.

Grants Provided

Grants totaling $1,596,699 were provided to 78 programs for the 2001/2002 year. This amount represents a 19% increase in grant funding over 2000/2001 (Figure 1). Of the 78 programs receiving funding, 40 were awarded grants for a one year term or received the first installment of a multi-year grant, while the remaining 38 programs were awarded multi-year funding in either 1999/2000 or 2000/2001 and received their second or third year installments.

Figure 1

TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED
1991/92 to 2001/02



Grants to police based victim assistance programs accounted for 75%, or $1,198,360 of the total grants allocated in 2001/2002. Of that amount, $938,760 or 78%, was provided to RCMP affiliated victim service units and the remaining $259,600 (22%) was provided to municipal police services.

Figure 2

GRANT DOLLARS AWARDED BY TYPE OF PROGRAM
2001/2002

Police based programs receive funding priority; however, other community groups and organizations that provide services to victims also receive funding. Community programs received 25% of the total grant funds provided, or $398,339.

Police Based Programs

As a result of community support and grants from the Victims of Crime Fund, a network of police based victim assistance programs has been established that provides access to services for victims in over 85% of the province (Appendix A). As of June 2002, there were 72 police based victims programs operating a total of 105 victims service units in Alberta.

Services provided to victims include intervention and support, information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, information about medical, legal and social services that can help, referrals to other community agencies, and court room orientation and accompaniment. These programs also provide victims of crime with information and assistance in completing victim impact statements, requesting restitution and applying for financial benefits. Police based programs provide a continuum of services to victims from the time of first response by police to the disposition of the case by the Courts, and provide services in accordance with provincial guidelines.

The following grants were awarded to police based programs in 2001/2002:

Assumption Region Community Policing Society	***$20,000***
Bashaw RCMP Victim Services Society	***$2,000***
Bonnyville RCMP Victim Services Unit	***$7,000***
Bow Island/Foremost Victim Services	***$2,000***
Brooks & District Victims' Assistance Association	***$19,000***
Camrose & District Victim Services Society	***$7,000***
Cold Lake Victim Services	***$15,000***
Crisis Association of Vegreville	***$10,900***
Grande Cache Victim Services Society	***$5,000***
Heartland Victim Service Units	***$5,000***
High Level Community Policing Society	***$25,000***
Highway 43 RCMP Victims' Services	***$25,000***
Innisfail Victim Service Unit — CAVAS	***$5,100***
Lacombe Victim Services	***$7,000***
Lethbridge Detachment Victims' Service Unit	***$3,500***

Lethbridge Police Service Victim/Witness Services Unit	***$50,000***
Midwest Regional Victim Services	***$15,000***
Louis Bull Police Service	***$7,500***
Peace River Victim Services Society	***$25,000***
Picture Butte Victims' Services Unit	***$2,000***
Pincher Creek RCMP Victim Services	***$9,000***
Ponoka Victims' Services Association	***$5,000***
Redcliff RCMP Victim Service Unit	***$2,100***
Red Deer Rural Victim Assistance Society	***$5,000***
Redwater & District Victim Services Unit	***$4,000***
Rimbey & District RCMP Victim Services	***$3,200***
Smoky River & District Victims' Assistance Program	***$9,000***
Strathmore Regional Victim Services Society	***$17,500***
Sylvan Lake & District Victims' Services Society	***$6,000***
Taber/Vauxhall Victims Services Unit	***$9,000***
Three Hills Victims' Assistance Program	***$2,000***
Vulcan Regional Victim Services Society	***$2,000***
Wabasca Regional Victim Services Society	***$30,000***
Total	***$361,800***

In addition to the grants listed above, the Victims of Crime Fund also supported the following police based programs which were awarded grants for two or three year terms in 1999/2000 or 2000/2001:

- ***Airdrie and District Victims Assistance Society***
- ***Athabasca Regional Victim Services Society***
- ***Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Association***
- ***Battle River Victim Assistance Society***
- ***Big Country Victim Services Association***
- ***Bow Valley Victim Services Association***
- ***Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit***

- *Cardium Region Victim Services Unit*
- *Chinook Arch Victim's Services Society*
- *Coaldale Police Victim Assistance Services*
- *Cochrane and Area Victim Services Society*
- *Edmonton Police Service Victim Service Unit*
- *Edson and District Victim Services Society*
- *Fairview Victim Assistance Association*
- *Foothills Regional Victim Services*
- *Fort McMurray Victim Services Society*
- *Volunteer Programs Association – Fort Saskatchewan*
- *Grande Prairie & District RCMP Victims Assistance Program Association*
- *High Prairie and District RCMP Victims Assistance Society*
- *Hinton District Victim Services*
- *Lac La Biche RCMP Victim Services Unit*
- *Leduc & District Victim Assistance Society*
- *Medicine Hat Police Service Victim Assistance Unit*
- *Rocky and District Victim Services Unit Society*
- *Sherwood Park RCMP Victim Services Unit*
- *Slave Lake Victim Services Society*
- *St. Albert Victim Services Association*
- *St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society*
- *Southern Alberta Victims' Assistance Association*
- *Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District*
- *Victim Service Unit – Sturgeon Region*
- *Tofield Area Victims Service Association*
- *Westlock Community Victim services Unit*
- *Wetaskiwin and District Victim Services Society*

Total ***$836,560***

Total Grants Provided to Police Based Programs in 2001/2002 ***$1,198,360***

Community Programs

Non-police based, or community programs usually offer more specialized services. Grants may be awarded to programs that provide specialized services to victims of a particular type of crime, for example, domestic violence, or may be awarded on a one-time basis for projects. Grants were awarded to the following groups in 2001/2002:

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) ***$36,000***
The grant was awarded to assist in the continuation of CCASA's Court Preparation Program. This program helps guide abuse victims through the court process and ensures court accompaniment. CCASA also provides individual and group counseling, and school-based and community education programs, as well as a 24-hour crisis line.

Calgary Legal Guidance/YWCA of Calgary ***$37,500***

The grant was provided to help fund one of the five programs Calgary Legal Guidance offers, the Court Preparation and Restraining Order Program. This programs is aimed at addressing the legal, safety and emotional issues faced by victims of domestic abuse. In addition to court preparation, accompaniment and counseling, Calgary Legal Guidance routinely monitors court cases and provides information to the victim on the status of the case.

Central Alberta Victims Assistance Society (CAVAS) ***$20,000***

CAVAS consists of the communities of Innisfail, Rimbey, Stettler, Bashaw, Ponoka, Camrose and the Red Deer Rural area which joined together in 1997. The main goals of CAVAS are to provide a forum for its members to share information, network and to address issues; create and maintain policy and procedures guidelines; and to conduct development training on an on-going basis. The grant was provided to fund the planning, organizing and training of the CAVAS volunteers.

Discovery House (Partner Support Program) ***$30,723***

Funding was provided to allow for the continuation of the Partner Support Program which was developed in collaboration with the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and the YWCA Sheriff King Family Support Centre. The program provides victims of domestic violence with information regarding community resources and support, with the goal of increasing the victim's safety and increasing their capacity to make changes in their own best interests.

Lloydminister Sexual Assault and Information Centre (LSAIC) ***$9,000***

The primary role of LSAIC is to provide crisis intervention, support and education to victims and survivors of sexual abuse. A grant was awarded to establish a Crisis Intervention / Victim Witness Program. The purpose of this project is to provide 25 hours a week for in office / outreach victim assistance crisis intervention, support and education. This would include accompanying victims to the hospital, to the RCMP to report the crime and preparing and accompanying primary or secondary sexual assault victims to court.

PACE (Providing Assistance, Counselling and Education) ***$20,116***

Funding was provided to establish and operate a Sexual Assault Court Support Project. The project would provide court preparation, accompaniment and support services to child, adolescent and adult victims of sexual assault.

Zebra Child Protection Centre Society ***$75,000***

The Child Protection Centre was developed by members of the Edmonton Police Service, Child Protection Section and co-professionals involved in the investigation of child maltreatment. The mandate of the child centred model places the focus on the child, ensuring that the need to deliver a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive investigation is conducted in the least intrusive and most protective environment possible. The program's advocates are specially trained and primarily focus on addressing the needs of victims of child physical and sexual abuse and their families. Funding was provided to assist with the start up costs, volunteer training and program maintenance.

Total ***$228,339***

In addition, a Victims of Crime Fund grant also supported the following community programs which received multi-year grants in either 1999/2000 or 2000/2001:

- ***Alberta Police-based Victim Services Association***
- ***Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse***
- ***Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre***
- ***Edmonton John Howard Society Victim Assistance Program***

Total Grants Provided to Community Programs in 2001/2002 ***$398,339***

Total Grants Provided in 2001/2002 ***$1,596,699***

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Introduction

Information on the activities of victims service programs was collected using the Quarterly Report form. The Report collects information on the number of new cases, the number of persons assisted, and the type of assistance provided. For each of these variables, the Report categorizes assistance provided as either *Criminal Code – Violent* (e.g. homicide, violent sex offences, serious assaults, etc.), *Criminal Code – Non-violent* (e.g. forgery, fraud, break and enter, etc.), *Offence Non-criminal* (offences that do not fall within the *Criminal Code of Canada*, i. e., Provincial Statute Offences) or *Assistance – No offence* (e.g. sudden death, notifying next-of-kin, motor vehicle collisions, suicide, etc.).

The Report also measures the use of volunteer hours, the number of victim impact statements completed and forwarded to the Crown prosecutor's office, and the number of restitution requests completed and forwarded to the Crown prosecutor.

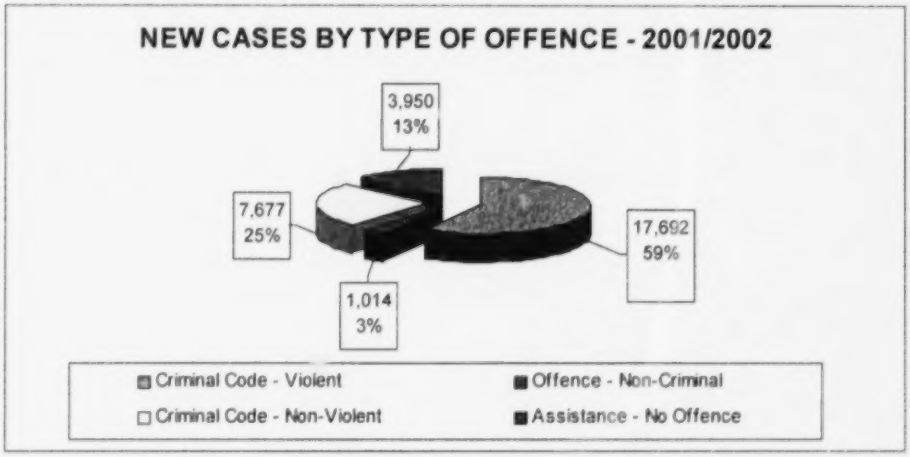
The statistics reported were collected from 92 police based victim service units that submitted a full year's data and nine police based victim service units that submitted data for part of the 2001/2002 fiscal year. As well, four community-based programs submitted statistics for that year.

Only programs funded by Alberta Solicitor General are required under their funding agreements to submit these statistics, although some non-funded programs also submit them. Data was submitted for only part of the year in cases where units were only operational for part of the year or only funded for part of the year.

New Cases

During 2001/2002 victim service programs reported handling 30,332 new cases. New cases refers only to those cases (files) opened during the reporting quarter. A case may involve one or more victims, and family members or friends affected by an incident of crime.

Figure 3

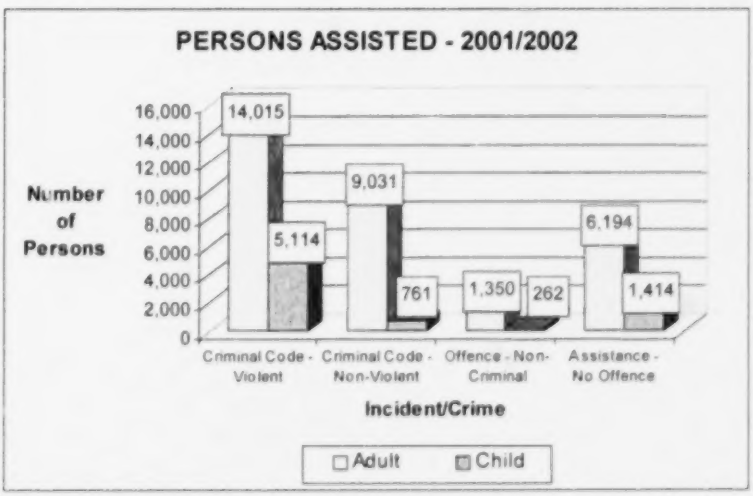


Of the 30,332 new cases, over half (59%) involved assisting victims of violent *Criminal Code* offences (Figure 3). Assistance was least often provided when the offence was Non-criminal (i.e., a Provincial Statute Offence).

Persons Assisted

Programs reported providing assistance to 38,141 people in 2001/2002, of which 30,590 (80%) were adults and 7,551 (20%) were children. Half of people assisted (50%) were victims of a *Criminal Code – Violent* offence, followed by people assisted in the *Criminal Code – Non-violent* category (26%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4

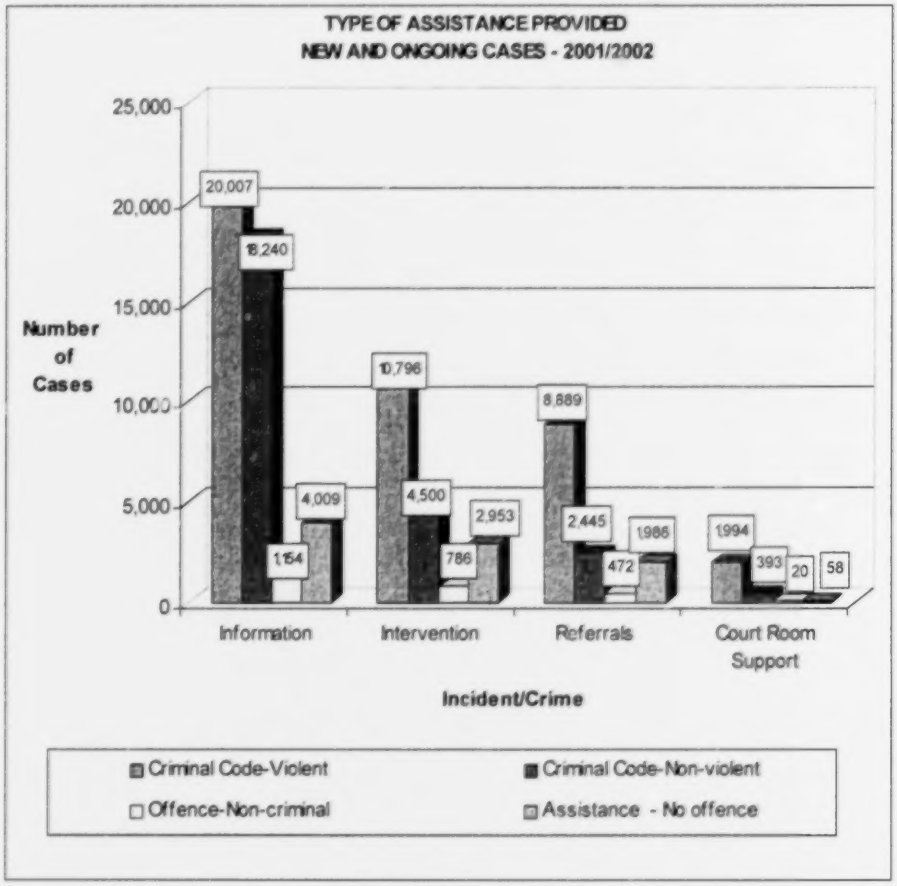


Type of Assistance

The type of assistance most frequently provided for new and ongoing cases was information. Intervention, which includes crisis response, notification of next of kin or practical assistance at a crime scene, was the second most common type of assistance provided, followed by referrals to other agencies, while court room support was provided in the least number of cases, whether new or ongoing (Figure 5).

Assistance was most often provided when the incident/offence was in the *Criminal Code – Violent* category. Assistance was least likely to be provided where the incident/offence was in the *Offence – Non-criminal* category.

Figure 5



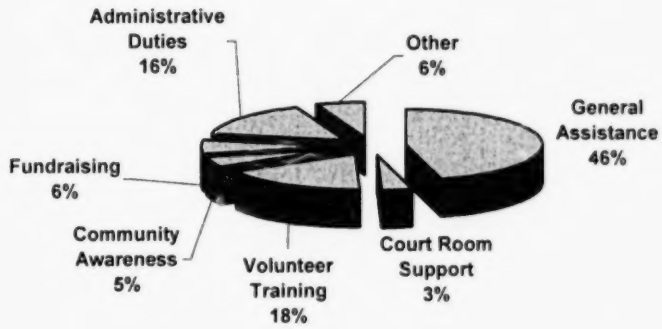
Volunteer Hours

In 2001/2002, approximately 1,640 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 229,439 volunteer hours, which equates to 117 people working full time for a one year period. This figure also includes hours volunteered by program staff over and above their paid time. During the same year, on average, programs employed 57 full-time and 66 part-time paid staff.

Providing general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims accounted for 46% of volunteer time. Eighteen percent of volunteer hours were dedicated to training, followed closely by administrative duties, at 16%. The remaining hours were spent on fundraising (6%), community awareness (5%), other activities, such as meetings and travel time (6%), and court room support (3%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6

VOLUNTEER HOURS
2001/2002



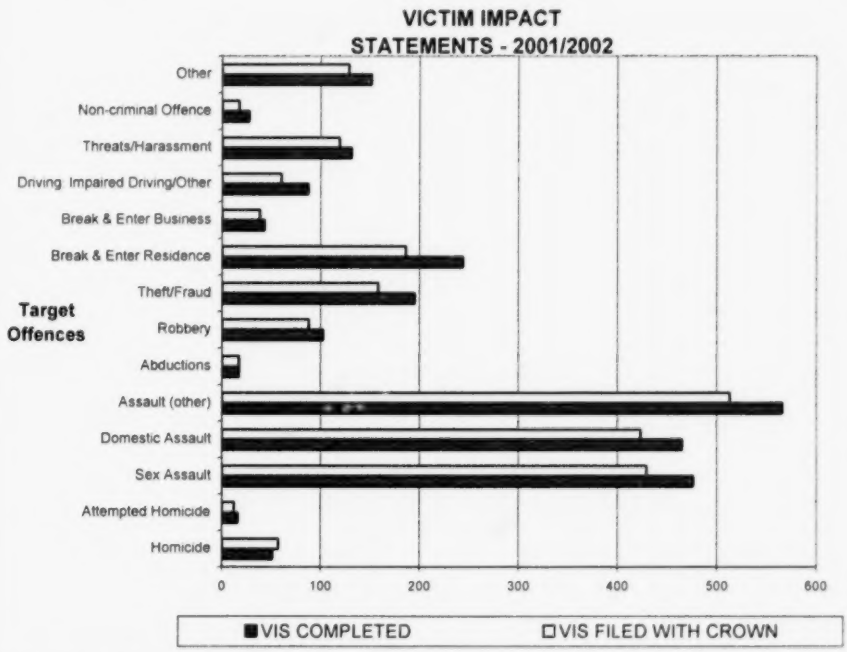
ALBERTA SOLICITOR GENERAL INITIATIVES

Victim Impact Statement Program

The Victim Impact Statement Program provides victims in Alberta with the opportunity to have input into sentencing by describing in writing, to the Court, how they have been affected by the crime.

Police notify all victims of crime of this opportunity and provide information about the nearest victim service unit, where the victim impact statement form and assistance in completing it can be obtained. The completed statements are returned to the police or victim service unit, who review the statement and forward it to the Crown prosecutor. As of December 1, 1999, victims have the option of reading their statements aloud in court. If the victim has chosen to do so, the police or victim services notify the victim of the court dates for sentencing. Prior to sentencing, the Court is required to inquire if the victim has been advised of the opportunity to prepare a statement and may adjourn proceedings to permit the victim to prepare a statement.

Figure 7

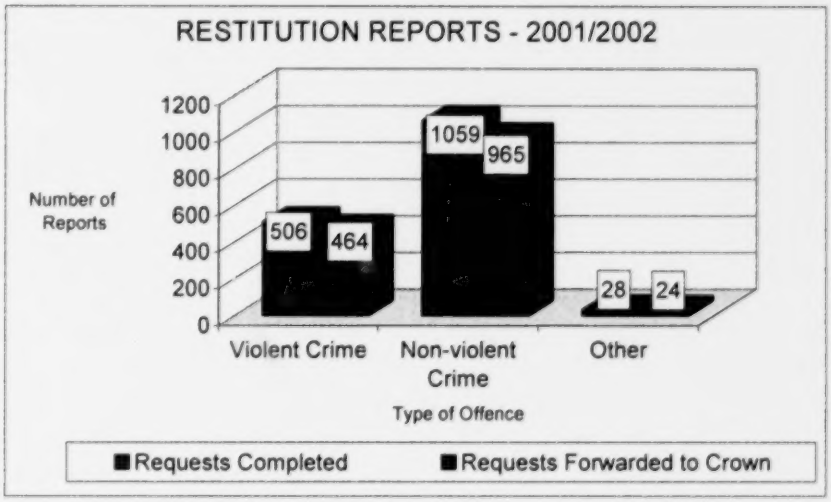


In the 2001/2002 reporting period, a total of 2,571 statements were completed and 2,245 statements were forwarded to the Crown, an increase of 1% and 6%, respectively from 2001/02. Of these statements, a significant portion concerned common assault, sexual assault and domestic assault (Figure 7). *Note: The difference in number completed and number forwarded occurs because a charge must be laid before statements are forwarded to the Crown.*

Requesting Restitution Program

The Requesting Restitution Program provides victims of crime who have suffered a financial loss, with information about how they can request that the offender pay restitution. A crime victim may complete a Request for Restitution Form provided by the police officer investigating the case or a victim support worker. Once the form is completed, the victim returns it to police, who forward it to the Crown prosecutor. The Crown prosecutor may make the application for restitution to the Court, or may decline to do so. If the Crown declines, the victim may request the Court to do so on its own motion.

Figure 8



Restitution may be ordered for damage, destruction and loss of property, bodily harm, expenses incurred in moving out of the offender's house, as in spousal abuse cases, or for losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property.

For the 2001/2002 year, 1,594 requests for restitution were completed and returned to police and 1,453 were then forwarded to the Crown, which represents an increase of 15% and 12%, respectively from 2000/2001. The majority of the requests for restitution concerned non-violent crime, with the next largest category being violent crime (Fig 8)

Victim Assistance Coordinator Training

The Victim Assistance Coordinators' Training was held March 11th to 15th, 2002. Fifty-three victim program coordinators, advocates and police members attended the training sessions at the Alberta Justice Staff College. Staff members from Court Services and Criminal Justice Divisions of Alberta Justice and the Public Security Division and Aboriginal Justice Initiatives of Alberta Solicitor General also attended.

The training provides information about the criminal justice system, federal and provincial legislation concerning victims of crime and information on related programs to assist victims in Alberta.

Victim Awareness Training and Handbook

To increase awareness of issues and concerns respecting victims of crime and to facilitate dialogue among those who work with victims, Alberta Solicitor General, Alberta Justice and Alberta Community Development facilitated the development of a training module by conducting victim awareness training pilot projects in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton. Crown prosecutors, criminal justice staff and community agencies participated and provided feedback. Based upon an evaluation of the piloted projects, a community-centred interactive victim awareness training module was developed and implemented in Crown prosecutor's offices throughout the province. In 2001/02, training was held in Calgary, Edmonton, Drumheller, Fort McMurray, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Peace River and Red Deer.

To supplement victim awareness training and to provide a "hands-on" resource manual, a Handbook was produced and distributed to Crown prosecutors throughout the province. As well, the Handbook was distributed to other agencies and organizations participating in the training.

Quarterly Report Form

Since April 1, 1998, victim service programs have been required to complete the Victim Services Quarterly Report. This statistical collection form provides Alberta Solicitor General with information about services provided to victims and acts as a measure of accountability for grant monies awarded. The Quarterly Report has standardized the reporting process and improved the quality of information collected about services provided to victims in Alberta.

Brochures

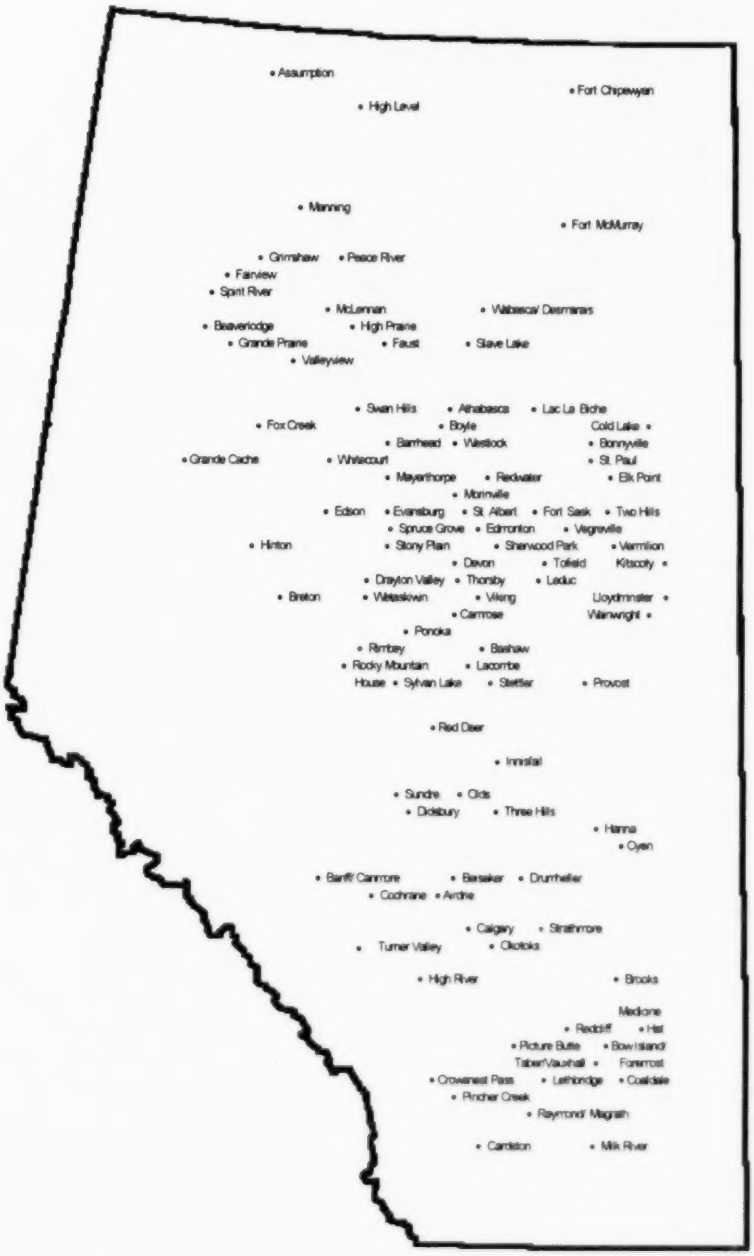
A series of brochures designed to increase awareness of programs available to victims of crime and to provide specific information on victim impact statements, restitution and financial benefits is distributed to police services, victim services units and other agencies that provide assistance to victims of crime.

NOVA Conference

In 1999 and 2000, grants were awarded to the Edmonton Police Service Steering Committee to assist with the operational costs of the National Organization of Victims Assistance 2001 Conference held in Edmonton (NOVA Conference 2001). The conference hosted 2,500 delegates from law enforcement, criminal justice and victim services agencies throughout the Alberta, Canada, the United States, as well as from the international community. The conference increased awareness of the issues and concerns of victims, profiled legislation and provided information about programs and services that assist victims.

APPENDIX A

ALBERTA POLICE BASED VICTIM SERVICE UNITS



CONTACT US

To obtain copies of brochures or for any other information, contact Alberta Solicitor General at:

Victims Programs
Public Security Division
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building
10365 – 97 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3W7
Phone: (780) 427-3460 (local calls) or
310-0000 (toll-free within Alberta)
or through our web-site at http://www.solgen.gov.ab.ca/victim/.